



J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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November 23, 2005

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **LATINO FAMILY INSTITUTE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT
REVIEW**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Latino Family Institute Foster Family Agency (Latino Family or Agency), a Foster Family Agency service provider. The review was conducted by the Auditor-Controller's Countywide Contract Monitoring Division.

Background

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contracts with Latino Family, a private, non-profit, community-based organization to recruit, train, and certify foster care parents for the supervision of children placed in foster care by DCFS. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program.

Latino Family is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. Latino Family oversees a total of 19 certified foster homes in which 31 DCFS children were placed. Latino Family is located in the Fifth District.

DCFS pays Latino Family a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Funding and Rate Bureau. Based on the child's age, Latino Family receives between \$1,589 and \$1,865 per month, per child. Out of these amounts, the Agency pays the foster parents between

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\$624 and \$790 per month, per child. For Fiscal Year 2004-05, DCFS paid Latino Family approximately \$545,000.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Latino Family was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and County contract. We also evaluated Latino Family's ability to achieve planned staffing levels. Our monitoring visit included verifying whether Latino Family received the appropriate reimbursement rate for each child and whether the certified foster parents received their portion of the reimbursement rate in a timely manner. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files, and interviewed Latino Family's staff, the children and the foster parents. We also visited a sample of certified foster homes.

Results of Review

Generally, Latino Family provided the services required in the County contract. The foster parents stated that the services they received from the Agency met their expectations and the children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. Latino Family also maintained the appropriate staffing levels and their social worker's caseloads did not exceed the maximum allowed by CDSS Title 22.

Latino Family needs to improve their oversight of the foster homes to ensure the foster parents comply with the provisions of Title 22 and the County contract. The two homes visited did not have operable smoke detectors. In addition, the case file for one foster parent did not contain proof of a current driver's license and automobile insurance for a designated driver used by the foster parent.

The County contract requires Latino Family to provide each child a comprehensive overview of the Agency's policies and procedures and have the child or the child's authorized representative sign an acknowledgement of completion and receipt of the policies and procedures and orientation. However, five (100%) of five case files reviewed did not contain signed copies of the Agency's orientation to its policies and procedures.

The details of our review, along with recommendation for corrective action, are attached.

Review of Report

On November 10, 2005, we discussed our report with Latino Family who agreed with the findings. In their attached response, Latino Family management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations contained in the report. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank Latino Family for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

JTM:MMO:DC

Attachment

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Maria Quintanilla, Executive Director, Latino Family Institute Foster Family Agency
Colleen Anderson, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**COUNTYWIDE CONTRACT MONITORING DIVISION
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006
LATINO FAMILY INSTITUTE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

PROGRAM SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Latino Family Institute Foster Family Agency (Latino Family or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 Regulations.

Verification

We visited two of the 19 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Latino Family billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for in February and March 2005 and interviewed the four foster parents and the five children placed in the two homes. We also reviewed the documentation in their case files for the four foster parents and five children. In addition, we reviewed the agency's monitoring activity.

Results

Generally, Latino Family provided the services required in the County contract. The foster parents stated that the services they received from Latino Family met their expectations and the children stated they enjoyed living with their foster parents. Latino Family maintained the appropriate staffing levels and their social worker case loads did not exceed the maximum allowed by CDSS Title 22.

Latino Family needs to improve their oversight of the foster homes to ensure that the foster homes are complying with all the provisions of Title 22 and the County contract. In addition, the Agency needs to ensure that reports contain all information required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. We specifically noted the following:

Foster Home Visitations

- For one (50%) of two homes visited, renovations had been on-going for more than a year. When we visited, construction was on "hold" due to a lawsuit with the construction company and as a result we noted numerous hazardous conditions. We specifically noted an exposed electrical box in the living room, missing plaster around the windows of the children's bedroom and doors, the floor in the foster children's bathroom was coming apart and the shower was in need of tile repair. The kitchen had inadequate lighting and there was a large hole in the ceiling, exposing roof material. Also, knives were stored in the kitchen in an unsecured location. The carpet in the hallway was worn through and was pulling away from the

hallway walls posing a safety hazard. Subsequent to the issuance of this report, we revisited the home and the Agency had the foster parents repair and correct all hazardous conditions except for replacing the flooring in the hallway.

- Two (100%) of two homes visited did not have operable smoke detectors as required by the County contract.

Foster Parent Certification

- One (25%) of four foster parents did not have a current first aid certificate as required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. Subsequent to the audit, the agency provided a letter from a first aid trainer indicating that the foster parent completed the required class.
- For one (50%) of two foster homes reviewed, Latino Family did not have proof of car insurance and/or a valid driver's license for one designated driver. The County contract requires the Agency to maintain records that the foster parents and their designated drivers who transport foster children have valid driver's licenses and insured vehicles.
- For one (50%) of two foster homes visited, Latino Family did not conduct an assessment to evaluate the foster parent's ability to effectively care for more than two children prior to placing more than two children in the home as required by the County contract.

Children's Records

- Five (100%) of five case files did not contain signed copies of the Agency's orientation to its policies and procedures. The County contract requires Latino Family to provide each new child a comprehensive overview of the Agency's policies and procedures and have the child or the child's authorized representative sign an acknowledgement of completion and receipt of the policies and procedures and orientation.

Reporting Requirements

- For four (100%) of four children whose placement ended during March and April 2005, the termination reports did not contain a closing summary relating to the children's placements as required by the County contract.

Latino Family needs to ensure that staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure that foster homes are in compliance with the County contract requirements and Title 22 regulations. Latino Family also needs to ensure that foster parents are trained and certified in first aid and CPR, maintain current driver's license and automobile insurance information for foster parents or their designated drivers and conduct an assessment to evaluate a foster home's capability to provide quality care for more than two placements

prior to placing more than two children in the home. In addition, Latino Family needs to ensure that foster children or their authorized representative receive an age appropriate orientation and sign the Agency's policies and procedures at the end of their orientation and that termination reports contain all information required by the County contract.

Recommendations

Latino Family management:

- 1. Ensure that staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure the foster homes comply with the County contract and Title 22 Regulations.**
- 2. Ensure that foster parents are trained and certified in first aid and CPR.**
- 3. Maintain current driver's license and auto insurance information of foster parents or their designated drivers.**
- 4. Ensure that staff conduct an assessment to evaluate a foster home's capability to provide quality care for more than two placements prior to placing more than two children in the home.**
- 5. Ensure that foster children or their authorize representative receive an age appropriate orientation and sign the agency's policies and procedures at the end of the orientation.**
- 6. Ensure that termination reports include all information required by the County contract.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

To determine whether the program participants actually received the services that Latino Family billed DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed five children placed in two Latino Family certified foster homes and four foster parents to confirm the services Latino Family billed to DCFS.

Results

The foster parents interviewed stated that the services they receive from Latino Family generally met their expectations and their assigned social workers visited them regularly and the children stated they enjoyed living with their foster parents.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS**Objective**

Determine whether Latino Family's social workers' case loads do not exceed 15 placements and whether the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers, as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We interviewed the director, supervising social worker and social workers and reviewed their personnel files. We also reviewed case load statistics and payroll records for February and March 2005.

Results

Latino Family's supervising social worker and four social workers maintained an average of seven cases. In addition, the supervising social worker supervised four social workers.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS**Objective**

Determine whether Latino Family's staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether Latino Family conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

Verification

We interviewed Latino Family's director and acting supervising social worker. In addition, we reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

Results

Latino Family's director, acting supervising social worker and social workers possessed the required education and work experience required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, Latino Family completed the appropriate hiring clearances and provided ongoing training to staff assigned to the County contract.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.



November 18, 2005

ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE

TO: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor Controller

C: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Maria L. Quintanilla, LCSW
Executive Director

Subject: Latino Family Institute: Foster Family Agency Contract Review

Pursuant to your review, this letter is in response to the audit recommendations stated in your findings. Your review had 6 recommendations for the agency. Listed below is each of those items followed by our corrective action plan.

Recommendations and Responses:

1. Ensure that staff adequately monitors foster homes to ensure the foster homes comply with the County contract and Title 22 Regulations.

Corrective Action Plan: Agency Social Workers were given follow-up training regarding Title 22 Regulations specifically as it related to adequately providing monthly home inspections and informing the agency immediately if the foster family is planning home renovations. Agency also revised its home inspection certification checklist and informed foster families of these new documents at the foster parent training on September 24, 2005.

2. Ensure that foster parents are trained and certified in first aid and CPR.

Corrective Action Plan: Agency Staff has revised its recertification checklist which needs to be completed a month prior to the recertification date to ascertain that all of the required documentation is obtained timely. Agency will also re-implement the Foster Trak software to maintain close monitoring of case documentation. Foster families were also reminded at the foster parent training on September 24, 2005 that agency's first aid and CPR instructor is available to do trainings at the foster home and on weekends to accommodate the foster families.

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www.latinoadoptions.com

3. Maintain current driver's license and auto insurance information of foster parents or their designated drivers.

Corrective Action Plan: All agency foster and adoptive parents received training on September 24, 2005 regarding the initial audit findings. Families were given updated foster adoptive parent manuals. Agency once again reiterated to foster parents the importance of updating their documentation as well as that of their designated drivers. Agency will also continue to monitor updated documentation using the agency's revised recertification checklist and Foster Trak Software.

4. Ensure that staff conducts an assessment to evaluate a foster home's capability to provide quality care for more than two placements prior to placing more than two children in the home.

Corrective Action Plan: Agency has historically conducted its assessment of foster parent capability through its home study process. However, now in addition to the home study assessment the agency has developed a Placement Assessment Form. This form will be used to document the rationale for foster families who are able to care for more than two children. This form will be attached to the completed home study.

5. Ensure that foster children or their authorized representative receive an age appropriate orientation and sign the agency's policies and procedures at the end of the orientation.

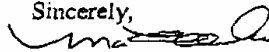
Corrective Action Plan: It is our policy to have the documents signed upon placement when children are too young to sign documents we send them to their DCFS worker to sign and return the document in a timely manner. From now on, agency will have the County placement worker sign the papers and will make copies and send to the case carrying worker.

6. Ensure that termination reports include all information required by the County contract.

Corrective Action Plan: Agency Social Workers have been informed about the requirement of completing a closing summary for all children who terminated from our programs. Agency staff will use the quarterly report format to summarize the child's placement, progress and recommendations within two weeks following the child's termination.

I appreciate the time you spent reviewing our program and our agency will implement your recommendations fully.

Sincerely,



Maria L. Quintanilla, LCSW
Executive Director